

Message Text

SECRET

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44

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 NEA-09 /060 W

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R 291321Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4277

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USCINCEUR

S E C R E T ADDIS ABABA 5079

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PFOR ET SU US

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH SUDANESE AMBASSADOR: ETHIO-SUDANESE
RELATIONS AND ERITREA

REF: ADDIS 4963

1. DURING MY CALL ON SUDANESE EMBASSADOR FAKHREDDINE MOHAMED
APRIL 28 I SOUGHT TO DRAW HIM OUT A BIT ON ETHIOPIA'S RELATIONS
WITH THE SUDAN.

2. HE VOLUNTEERED THAT IT HAD BEEN A MISTAKE FOR SUDAN TO MAKE
PUBLIC NIMEIRI'S OFFER OF MEDIATION; THE PUBLICITY AND ANNOYED
BOTH GOE AND THE ELF. HE SAID THAT GOE POSITION ON NEGOTIATIONS
WITH THE ELF WAS STILL VERY HARD AND CAUTIOUS: ON CEASE-FIRE PROPOSAL
GOE BLANDLY SAYING THAT ELF HAD STARTED THE HOSTILITIES AND IT
WAS THEREFORE UP TO THEM TO STOP; ON SUDANESE SUGGESTIONS FOR AN
ANMESTY OFFER GOE ASSERTING THAT THIS HAD ALREADY BEEN OFFERED
AND WAS STILL IN EFFECT (BUT ACTUALLY GOE VAGUE "OFFER" HAD BEEN
BURIED IN A LONG SPEECH BY PMAC CHAIRMAN TEFERI SOME TIME AGO).

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3. HE SAID GOE HAD ASKED SUDAN TO HELP EXPLAIN GOE POSITION TO THE ARAB COUNTRIES AND TO EXPLAIN THAT IF SOLUTION IS NOT FOUND, THERE WOULD INEVITABLY BE A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN ARAB AND BLACK AFRICAN COUNTRIES ON THE ISSUE. I SAID THAT IN SOME USG CONTACTS WITH MODERATE ARAB COUNTRIES WE HAD FOUND SOME MISUNDERSTANDING THAT ERITREANS ARE PREDOMINANTLY MUSLIM, WHEREAS ACTUALLY POPULATION WAS ABOUT HALF CHRISTIAN, AND THAT SUDAN COULD PERHAPS HELP BY EXPLAINING THIS FACT ALSO. HE AGREED THAT THIS WAS UNFORTUNATE MISUNDERSTANDING PROMOTED BY ELF, AND THAT SYRIA AND IRAQ ESPECIALLY WERE SEIZING ON THIS POINT TO PLAY A NON-HELPFUL ROLE THAT PROMOTES INTRANSIGENCE ON PART OF ELF. HE WAS PESSIMISTIC THAT NEGOTIATIONS COULD BEGIN IN NEAR FUTURE BUT HAD SOME HOPE THAT OVER LONGER RUN THERE MIGHT BE TALKS WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS, ALTHOUGH THIS WOULD TAKE SOME TIME. HE SAID THAT RECENT ACTIONS BY ETHIOPIAN TROOPS IN ERITREA DIRECTED AGAINST CIVILIAN POPULATION HAD ALIENATED 90 PERCENT OF ERITREANS. I ASKED ABOUT ELF AND PLF LEADERS WHO HAVE REPORTEDLY BEEN VISITING KHARTOUM IN RECENT WEEKS, BUT HE SAID HE HAD NOT RECEIVED ANY REPORTS ABOUT THEM. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT A PMAC REPRESENTATIVE HAD VISITED KHARTOUM A FEW WEEKS AGO FOR TALKS WITH GOS ABOUT ERITREA BUT FLATLY DENIED THAT THE REPRESENTATIVE HAD HAD CONTACT WITH ANY ERITREAN DISSIDENTS.

4. HE SAID HIS GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN URGING GOE TO MAKE A CLEAR PUBLIC STATEMENT ABOUT ITS ATTITUDE TOWARD A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT, BUT GOE WAS VERY RELUCTANT. I SAID USG HAD SUGGESTED SAME THING WITH SIMILAR RESULT. I STRESSED THAT WHILE USG HAD MADE A PUBLIC STATEMENT OF OUR HOPE FOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF ETHIOPIA'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY, WE HAD NO INTENTION OF INJECTING OURSELVES INTO ANY NEGOTIATING PROCESS. WE SUPPORTED SUDAN'S INITIATIVE AND HOPED THAT SUDAN AND OTHERS COULD HELP TO GET TALKS STARTED.

5. AMBASSADOR FAKHREDDINE SAID THAT SUDAN HAD BEEN TRYING TO ARRANGE A MEETING OF THE ETHIOPIA-SUDAN CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE BUT GOE FONMIN KIFLE'S SCHEDULE OF TRIPS HAD CAUSED DELAYS. A MEETING DURING THE SECOND WEEK OF MAY NOW SEEMED FAIRLY CERTAIN. HE THOUGHT THE MEETING WOULD CONCENTRATE ON "NORMAL" BORDER MATTERS (CF REFTEL).

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6. COMMENT: AMBASSADOR FAKHREDDINE IS EXPERIENCED, HIGHLY ARTICULATE AND, FOR A PRELIMINARY MEETING, RATHER FRANK. WE ARE INCLINED TO AGREE THAT IT WILL BE SOME TIME BEFORE ANY TALKS BETWEEN ELF/PLF AND GOE CAN BE ARRANGED.
HUMMEL

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NNN

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